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HOMEMAKERS' CHAT

SATURDAY, December 9, 1939.

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

Subject: "Pre-Christmas Clean-Up." Information from the Office of Experiment Stations and the Bureau of Home Economics, U.S.D.A.

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These are days when things-to-do pile up until you wonder if you can be ready for Christmas. Along with the gifts and food to prepare, you have to see that the family's clothes are in order for holiday festivities. And with company coming, you want the house to look its best, too. No use trying to make any room attractive with Christmas greens and other decorations, if the woodwork shows finger marks and the walls look soiled and dingy.

But you haven't time to do thorough housecleaning right now. You only have time to clean the places that need it most. So here are some tips to help you with a quick clean-up.

First, about those finger marks and soiled places on the woodwork. You can wash painted woodwork. In fact, you can wash almost any surface painted with oil paint if you use lukewarm water and mild soap jelly. After washing, rinse and dry the paint. Wash with an up-and-down stroke. Overlap your strokes to avoid streaks.

But let me warn you. Never use strong soap on paint. The alkali in strong soap weakens and discolors paint. And never use coarse scouring powder. Coarse scouring powder takes the surface off the paint. Then the paint gets dirty quicker and is harder to clean. If some places on the paint need scouring, use powdered chalk which goes by the name of whiting. Or use some other fine gentle scouring powder.

The Rhode Island Experiment Station suggests an even easier way to wash painted woodwork. Wash it with a liquid glue solution. Here's how to make the liquid glue. Soak a half pound of dry powdered glue in cold water. Then add 2 quarts of boiling water. Boil the glue and water 10 minutes. Now you have your liquid glue. Use a cup of this liquid glue in each basin of washing water. Simply dip your soft cloth or sponge in the basin of glue and water, wring out the cloth, and go over the painted woodwork. That's all. No rinsing. No drying. The glue cleans and also gives a gloss to paint, according to the Rhode Island Experiment Station.

Cleaning walls may be more difficult than cleaning woodwork. It depends on how the walls are finished. If your walls are painted with washable oil paint, you can wash them as you do painted woodwork. Use a soft cloth or sponge wrung out of mild soapsuds. Wash up and down the walls with an even stroke. Then rinse and dry the paint. You can clean badly soiled places with a little gentle scouring.

Or you can wash painted walls with a special cleaning mixture of soap and water and turpentine. Dissolve 2 tablespoons of mild soap powder in 1 quart of warm water. Then add 3 tablespoons of turpentine and stir rapidly. Wash the walls then rinse and dry with a soft cloth.

But for some painted walls washing won't do. If your walls are painted with calcimine, you can't wash them clean. All you can do is to give them a new coat of calcimine. And you probably haven't time for a job like that before Christmas.

As for wall paper, some kinds will and some kinds won't stand washing. If the paper is guaranteed washable, you can wash it much as you painted walls and woodwork with mild soap and soft cloth or sponge. And you rinse and dry it after washing. Light colored washable paper you wash with clear lukewarm water, no soap.

Now if wall paper is not washable, then you have your choice of several ways to clean it. You can buy various pastes and powders for cleaning. Or you can make

your own cleaning paste. Or you can do as our grandmothers did and rub it clean with soft bread. Cut off the scratchy crust from a loaf of bread. Then use the soft inside like a great big eraser. Erase the dirt from the walls in long even vertical strokes.

If you want to make your own cleaning paste, here's a receipt from the State of Louisiana for a doughy paste made of flour, water, salt, kerosene oil and ammonia. Use 2 cups of flour; 1 cup of warm water; 2 tablespoons of salt; 2 tablespoons of kerosene oil; and 4 tablespoons of household ammonia. Mix all these ingredients together and cook in a double boiler over water. When the paste becomes doughy and no longer sticks to your fingers when you roll it between them, take it from the fire and cool it in a covered pan. Then make the dough into a big ball and rub it lightly on the wall paper always in one direction. When the dough shows soil, fold the soil under and continue cleaning.

Cleaning wallpaper takes care and skill, no matter what cleaner you use. If you are inexperienced, better try out a little on the wall behind a door or somewhere that won't show. Then you'll know whether you can clean successfully. If the cleaning isn't successful, the wall may look worse than it did before you started.

But maybe your wallpaper is not soiled all over, just looks bad because of some grease spots. Grease spots behind the sofa, for example, from oily hair. Try this. Lay a clean piece of white blotting paper over the grease spot. Then press the blotter with a hot iron. That may melt the grease into the blotter. Or make a paste of cornstarch and some cleaning fluid like carbon tetrachloride. Spread this paste over the grease spot. When the paste dries and falls off the wall, it will take the grease with it. Sometimes you need several applications of the paste before all the grease comes out.

That's all the hints today to help with your pre-Christmas clean-up.

